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BANGLADESH

**STATEMENT BY H.E. AMBASSADOR SHEIKH MOHAMMED BELAL
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF BANGLADESH TO THE OPCW AT THE
TWENTY-FIRST SESSION OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE STATES PARTIES**

Chairperson of the Conference of the States Parties, Ambassador D. Christoph Israng,
Director-General of the OPCW, Ambassador Ahmet Üzümcü,
Members of international organisations, specialised agencies, and the scientific community,
Members of civil society and NGOs,
Distinguished delegates,
Excellencies,
Ladies and gentlemen,

Allow me first to extend to Your Excellency Ambassador Dr Christoph Israng our warm welcome as the Chair of the Twenty-First Session of the Conference of the States Parties. We are confident that under your able guidance and leadership, the conduct of business of this session will come to a successful conclusion. I would also like to congratulate the newly elected members of the Bureau and other officials. We pledge our fullest support and cooperation to you and the members of your Bureau in the discharge of your mandate.

We would also like to extend our appreciation to the outgoing Chair of the Twentieth Session of the Conference of the States Parties, Ambassador Eduardo Ibarrola-Nicolín of Mexico for all his dedicated efforts during the Twentieth Session.

I take the opportunity to register our deep appreciation to the Director-General Ambassador Ahmet Üzümcü for his well-articulated statement delivered in this session and his outstanding leadership in making this Organisation befitting for tomorrow and beyond. I also wish to commend the members of the Technical Secretariat for their dedication and hard work in promoting further the role of this Organisation in the international disarmament regime and in carrying out its functions under the Chemical Weapons Convention.

We welcome the Ambassador and Permanent Representative of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela to the OPCW Her Excellency Haifa Aissami Madah to assume the coordinating role on behalf of the Member States of the Non-Aligned Movement that are States Parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention and China at the OPCW. We would like to appreciate the Ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Iran H.E. Alireza Jahangiri for his dedication and full-fledged efforts in coordinating on behalf of the Member States of the Non-Aligned Movement that are States Parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention and China at the OPCW.



My delegation endorses and fully aligns itself with the statement delivered in this session by Her Excellency Ms Haifa Aissami Madah, on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement and China.

Bangladesh, as an original signatory to the Chemical Weapons Convention, is firmly committed to the aspirations of the OPCW in ridding the world of chemical weapons. Bangladesh deeply appreciates the near universality of the Chemical Weapons Convention and urges the remaining States that are not parties to the Convention to consider acceding to the Convention at the earliest. As the leading contributor to the United Nations peacekeeping operations across the world, Bangladesh deeply values her sacrifice and contribution to world peace. In this spirit, Bangladesh remains eager to contribute to the OPCW with all possible means. We are happy to mention that Bangladesh, in her humble way, hosted the “Regional Seminar on Chemical Safety and Security Management” in Dhaka from 18 to 20 October 2016. We are honoured that Director-General Ambassador Ahmet Üzümcü inaugurated the regional seminar in Dhaka on 18 October 2016. Bangladesh also hosted the “16th Asian Chemical Congress” in Dhaka from 16 to 19 March 2016.

Bangladesh is aware of that the destiny of Chemical Weapons Convention will be what we make of it. We, Bangladesh, therefore, reiterate our long-standing principled position towards the achievement of general and complete disarmament, under strict and effective international control, including the prohibition and elimination of all weapons of mass destruction in line with the Convention. We, therefore, remain committed to the journey of keeping the OPCW relevant, functional and universally appealing to all and every human being of this world.

Bangladesh reaffirms that the use of chemical weapons and toxic chemicals as a weapon anywhere by anyone and under any circumstances is reprehensible and completely contrary to the provisions of the Convention and all norms of international law. We also feel that all chemical weapons must be destroyed at the earliest and we urge all the possessor States to expedite their destruction processes.

Bangladesh appreciates the global consensus against chemical weapons in Syria and welcomes the continued cooperation between the Syrian Government and the OPCW that brought about some remarkable achievements despite a multitude of challenges. Bangladesh hopes to see an earlier implementation of the OPCW's on-going missions in Syria. Bangladesh expresses her deep satisfaction on the announcement made by the OPCW confirming the successful removal of precursor chemicals from Libya.

While we note progress in disposing off the declared chemical weapons stockpiles in the Syrian Arab Republic and Libya, it is unsettling that the OPCW-United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism has affirmed the use of chemical weapons in the Syrian territory. Our concerns are further aggravated by the knowledge that terrorist groups like Da'esh and others are in possession of, and may have resorted to using toxic chemicals, or combinations thereof, as chemical weapons against civilians. Bangladesh condemns these actions with the strongest possible terms and urge all to work together. Thereby honour our past by reaching out for a better future.

Bangladesh is convinced that the adoption of an action plan for the full and effective implementation of Article XI is paramount. We welcome the States Parties' commitment to promote peaceful uses of chemistry as obligated under Article XI. We urge all the stakeholders to ensure the fullest possible exchange of chemicals, equipment, scientific and technical information for the peaceful uses of chemistry. Bangladesh welcomes the efforts

made by the Technical Secretariat to enhance the implementation of Article XI and urges all for a systematic approach to the full and effective implementation of this Article taking into due consideration of the needs of the developing countries.

Bangladesh attaches great importance on education and outreach programmes and welcomes the work done by the Advisory Board on Education and Outreach. We look forward to enhanced awareness about the Convention.

The OPCW has achieved tremendous success since the Convention came into force in 1997 by dint of the unwavering support of the States Parties. With regard to the future priorities, we welcome the establishment of the Open-Ended Working Group on the Future Priorities of the OPCW, to discuss and formulate a document in this regard in order to be adopted at the Fourth Review Conference. Bangladesh believes that the complete elimination of all categories of chemical weapons should remain the priority focus of the OPCW. We appreciate the efforts by the Co-Chairs of the Working Group Ambassador Sabine Nölke of Canada and Ambassador Bruce Koloane of South Africa in formulating the methods and programme of work, and encourage them to continue cooperation with all States Parties.

Bangladesh continues to fulfil its obligations under Article VII of the Convention relating to National Implementation Measures. We deeply appreciate the active encouragement and support of the Technical Secretariat to this end. Bangladesh believes that the States Parties lacking capacity and capability would get appropriate assistance for enabling them for the full implementation of the Convention.

Before conclusion, let us remind ourselves of the painful fact that the Convention is faced with some serious challenges. None of these challenges can be solved quickly or easily. But all of them demand that we listen to each other and work together; that we focus on our common interests, not on occasional differences; and that we reaffirm our shared values, which are stronger than any force that could drive us apart. Bangladesh is committed to do it because we are committed to our resolve that chemical weapons simply have no place in the 21st century.

I would like to request that this statement be circulated as an official document of the Twenty-First Session of the Conference of the States Parties and be published on the OPCW website and extranet.

I thank you, Mr Chairperson.

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